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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Father, we look to You this day for help. Without Your help our Senators can see the ideal but cannot reach it; they can know the right but cannot do it; they can seek the truth but cannot fully find it; they can recognize their duty but cannot perform it. Empowered by Your might, help them to reach beyond guessing to knowing and beyond doubting to certainty regarding Your purposes.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEFF MERKLEY led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 1, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MERKLEY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks the Senate will be in morning business until 11 a.m. Following that morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Defense Department authorization bill. This will be postcloture debate. We expect to complete action on the Defense bill today. We will give everyone as much notice as we can when we have votes coming.

Additionally, yesterday I filed cloture on a motion to proceed to S. 1917, a middle-class tax cut. If no agreement is reached, this vote will be tomorrow morning.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S.J. RES. 30, S.J. RES. 31, S.J. RES. 32, S. 1930, S. 1931, S. 1932 EN BLOC

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are six measures at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the measures by title for the second time en bloc.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 30) extending the cooling-off period under section 10 of the Railway Labor Act with respect to the dispute referred to in Executive Order No. 13586 of October 6, 2011.

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 31) applying certain conditions to the dispute referred to in Executive Order 13586 of October 6, 2011, between the enumerated freight rail carriers, common carriers by rail in interstate commerce, and certain of their employees represented by labor organizations that have not agreed to extend the cooling-off period under section 10 of the Railway Labor Act under section 10 of the Railway Labor Act between 12:01 a.m. on December 6, 2011.

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 32) to provide for the resolution of the outstanding issues in the current railway labor-management dispute.

A bill (S. 1930) to prohibit earmarks.

A bill (S. 1931) to provide civilian payroll tax relief, to reduce the Federal budget deficit, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 1932) to require the Secretary of State to act on a permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings in regard to these matters.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the measures will be placed on the calendar.

PAYROLL TAX CUTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday on the Senate floor my friend the Republican leader said he supports an extension of the payroll tax cut that had been enacted last year. There has been an extreme change of heart here. On the Sunday shows the assistant leader, my friend, the junior Senator from Arizona, said Sunday: Not a chance they would work to extend this payroll tax cut. Then, as late as Tuesday, my friend the Republican leader said it would not "do a thing to help the economy." Obviously there has been a change of heart since then by the leaders of the Senate Republicans.

But I noted yesterday that my friend was very careful to say only that he supports existing cuts, not that he supports our plan to cut taxes for 160 million workers in every business in the country.

Last night I found out why. I was disappointed to see the Republicans' alternate proposal was actually a backdoor route to protect the very rich while shortchanging the middle class and small businesses. Should we be surprised at this? That is what has been going on this past year. Our proposal would provide relief for American families and extend existing tax cuts to benefit businesses. The Republican proposal rejects this new tax relief and

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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